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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

ORIGINAL DATE 2/01/06

SPONSOR Moore LAST UPDATED _____ HB 303

SHORT TITLE UNM Health Sciences Center Telehealth Program SB _____

ANALYST Earp

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY06	FY07		
	\$1,000.0	Recurring	General Fund

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

Relates to Appropriation in the General Appropriation Act

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

Higher Education Department (HED)

Department of Health (DOH)

Heal

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

House Bill 303 appropriates \$1,000,000 from the general fund to the Board of Regents of the University Of New Mexico (UNM) for the Telehealth Program at the UNM Health Sciences Center.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The appropriation of \$1,000,000 contained in this bill is a recurring expense to the general fund. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of fiscal year 2007 shall revert to the general fund.

This appropriation would augment a recurring line-item appropriation for telemedicine which is contained in the annual General Appropriation Act. For fiscal year 2006, UNM-HSC received an appropriation of \$436,100 for this purpose.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

This proposal was not included among the special program funding requests submitted by UNM to the Higher Education Department (HED) for review. Consequently, this proposal has not been included in the HED fiscal year 2007 funding recommendations to the Legislature.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

UNM-HSC currently administers the state appropriations provided for telehealth. No significant additional administrative impact is evident if this legislation is adopted.

CONFLICT, DUPLICATION, COMPANIONSHIP, RELATIONSHIP

This bill relates to HB 289 which appropriates \$600,000 to the UNM School of Medicine to work with the corrections department and a network of primary care clinics to continue to develop a model of training and service delivery utilizing interactive telemedicine.

This bill also relates to SB89 and HB217. These are duplicate bills which appropriate \$460,000 to UNM to develop a network of community health centers by using an existing telemedicine program.

OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

The Health Policy Commission reports that “telehealth” is the use of computer technology connected by high-speed or wireless communication to access health care providers, communicate diagnostic information and find best practice advice and training. New Mexico is the fifth largest state, geographically, which means many residents face gaps in health care access due to the lack of medical and behavioral health specialists in rural areas and distances they need to travel to receive care. Telehealth attempts to reduce health care disparities due to a patient’s physical location.

The Center for Telehealth resulted from a study initiated by the 1994 Legislature through House Joint Memorial 13. The Memorial, which was sponsored by the Health Care Task Force, requested “the Department of Health and the University of New Mexico School of Medicine to develop a model to use advanced technology to support and educate rural health care providers.” The Center for Telehealth states its mission as “one of outreach to the rural areas of the state, helping UNM programs and departments deliver their expertise and services to areas of the state where specialty services and education are difficult to obtain.”
(<http://hsc.unm.edu/telemedicine/Program/AnnualReport.htm>)

According to this annual report, in FY 2005, the Center for Telehealth served 4742 participants including 650 patients. Additionally, the Center for Telehealth accomplished the following activities in FY 2005:

- Developed and successfully piloted mobile videoconferencing solution;
- Developed a comprehensive Statewide Telehealth Training Plan;
- Supported project REACH (Rural Early Access to Children’s Health) in delivering clinical services and continuing education;
- Developed operational and technical assessments for SBIRT, a statewide behavioral

health network;

- Installed additional broadband videoconferencing sites at UNM HSC and in rural communities; and,
- Received additional funding to validate Project TOUCH applications and further develop immersive virtual reality capability.

(<http://hsc.unm.edu/telemedicine/Program/AnnualReport.htm>)

The New Mexico Telehealth Commission, created by the 2005 Legislature, is working towards improving health care in the state through the use of telehealth. The New Mexico Telehealth Commission and the Center for Telehealth should work collaboratively towards their common goals.

POSSIBLE QUESTIONS

Is this legislation intended to expand telehealth services in New Mexico in particular ways?

DKE/nt